

DCRPT secures convictions against ex-Connections employee

Convictions secured after former DOC nurse was caught lying to investigators

The Delaware Department of Justice's Division of Civil Rights & Public Trust (DCRPT) has secured two misdemeanor convictions against a former employee of Connections, which at the time served as the Department of Correction's (DOC) medical contractor.

"Delawareans deserve integrity from every publicly paid professional, including contractors who lie about their official acts," said Attorney General Jennings. "Lying to the public is always unacceptable – particularly when it deals with something as sensitive as inmate medical care. In this case, it was also criminal. This is a victory for honesty in public service, and I'm grateful to the prosecutors and police who made it possible."

On the morning of October 8, 2018, Delaware State Police responded to Sussex Correctional Institution in reference to a deceased inmate, who was pronounced dead shortly thereafter. While foul play was ultimately ruled out in the inmate's death, the investigation revealed repeated discrepancies in claims made by Erin Clark-Penland, who worked as a nurse at the facility. Clark-Penland claimed to investigators that she had seen the inmate the previous night, and even entered that claim in official medical logs. Video surveillance and witness testimony showed that both claims were lies.

Following a later review, DCRPT brought the case before a grand jury on June 23, 2020 and secured indictments for

Falsifying Business Records and Providing a False Statement to Law Enforcement. A Sussex County jury found Clark-Penland guilty as charged Monday following a one-day trial

Deputy Attorney General David Skoranski secured the conviction following an investigation by Det. Lindsay Coleman of Delaware State Police. Clark-Penland will be sentenced by a Superior Court judge on a date to be determined. Her convictions carry a maximum prison sentence of two years.